

A

# REVIEW

## OF THE

### Affairs of FRANCE:

Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of *News Writers*  
and *Petty-Statesmen*, of all Sides.

Tuesday, June 6. 1704.

**S**ome have reflected very much on the *French* Prudentials, for suffering themselves to lie so open on the side of *Savoy*, while at the same time they have with so much Care and Cost, Fortified every Avenue of the whole Kingdom, on the other sides.

But I presume such People have not given themselves leave to consider, that the *French* have always acted their Parts by Policy on that side, and found it as Effectual.

*France* has Fortify'd it self in every Place, in due proportion to the Enemies it had to fear; and those on this side being never likely to be in a condition to Attack so Powerful an Enemy, the King of *France* never found any occasion of great Strengths on that side, at least till he had opportunity to fix them in the *Italian* Territories.

*France's* Principal Enemies must come out of *Spain*, *England* or *Germany*; if the *Germans* had been absolute Lords of *Italy*, there is no Question but the *French* would have been as well guarded on that side, as on the *Rhine* and the *Moselle*.

But *Italy* is subdivided into above 47 several Kingdoms, Dukedoms, Principalities or Common-Wealths, reckoning all the

petty States of the *Helvetic Union*, known to *Europe* by the Name of *Swiss Cantons*; as these can never Unite, so if they should all Unite in one Body, the *Swiss* excepted, and joyn their Powers against *France*; one such Army as is now under the Command of the Duke of *Vendosme*, would be a Match for them all.

First they are generally Poor, and not able to Maintain a War, the *Venician* excepted, and even they are far from being Rich; a chargeable Campaign or two, would ruin them all.

Secondly, The *Italians* are so Despicable in their Character in the Field, that the present *French* Army above-mentioned, now in *Italy*, suppose it to be 50000 Men, would think themselves a Match; and make no scruple to fight with 100000 of the best *Italian* Troops now in the World.

So much has Sloth, Bigottry, and Debauchery, Effeminated the Gallantest and most Magnanimous Nation in the World; who that should Travel into *Italy*, and see the figure that People now make in the World, would imagine that these should be the Remains of the Ancient *Romans*, the Glory, and Conquerours of the World?

Who that sees the *Italians* basely revenging their Private Quarrels by the Coward;

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ly, Bloody and Clandestine Methods of Assassination, Stabbing, Poisoning, and the like; nay, and the still more Cowardly and unmanly Method of hyring *Bravoës* and Bullies to do it for them, not daring to look a Man in the Face themselves; who, I say, that sees these things, can suppose this is the Ancient Blood of the Citizens of *Rome*, the Posterity of the *Scipio's*, *Marius's*, and *Cæsars* of the *Romans*?

To this despicable Degeneracy is the Noble Off-spring of that Valiant and Virtuous Nation Descended; and if the *French* have suffered themselves to lie more open on this side, and venture the Insults of the *Italians*; it has been *because they knew them*, and of what a mean Consideration, the utmost they could do, would ever amount to —.

On the other hand, as to the Duke of *Savoy*, the *French* always either made him a Property, and so his Country, which is full of strong Towns, serv'd as a Barrier to the Kingdom of *France*; or else took care to be always in a Condition to Insult him, and take Possession of enough of his Country, to make the rest the Seat of War on that side.

And these, I think, are some of the Reasons which induce the *French* to be less Careful of their Frontiers on that side; so that when in the late War, the Duke of *Savoy* back'd by the *Imperialists*, was one Summer Master of the Field; he Invaded *France* without Opposition, took *Gap* and *Ambrun*, and might have Travers'd all *Provence*, if he had not been prevented following his blow, by the small Pox, which seiz'd him, made him Prisoner at Discretion, and carried him away to *Turin*.

And this, if I mistake not, is the only time that any of the Enemies of *France*, have been able to set their Foot in the Hereditary Dominions of that King, since the Surprize of *Amiens*, in the Reign of *Henry the fourth*, or since the Peace of *Vervins*; so well and so clearly have the *French* always Guarded their Frontiers, and made it a constant Maxim to carry the War into their Enemies Country, and make War at their Charge, as well as upon their Lands.

Then as to the *Swiss*, they have been always Neuter; that is to say, the *French* have always manag'd them by their Money,

and the Agency of their Ambassadors, sometimes with hard words, sometimes with soft; to day Blustering and Threatning them, to morrow Courting and Caressing them, at all times letting them taste the Benefit of Correspondence with *France*, by a needful Emission of the Sovereign Cordial, I mean *French Money*, which has never fail'd to have such an Operation upon the *Swiss*, that in Cases which have run most against their Interest and Inclination, if *France* has not obtain'd its end in the *Swiss*, it has never fail'd to Divide them so, as that the Enemy has likewise fail'd in theirs.

I never choose to go far back for an Example, when I can find one for my purpose nearer at hand, for the General Knowledge of a Modern Instance, seems to me a stronger Argument, than the Antiquity of one more Remote.

The Present Dispute between *France* and the *Swiss Cantons*, about the Neutrality of the Dutchy of *Savoy*, is a remarkable Case, and serves exactly to the present purpose. 'Tis without Question that the Resolves of the several Cantons in favour of the Neutrality, and their Assisting the Duke of *Savoy*, with Forces, when ever his Territories should be Invaded, was the first-agreeable to their true Interest, and the last to the firm Stipulations of Divers Leagues between the Duke and those People.

As to their Interest; 'tis plain, it cannot be their Interest to be Surrounded by such a Neighbour as the *French*, and those Senators or Counsellors of *Bern*, who saw the True Interest of their Country, made it so plain to the respective Magistracy, that it was unanimously agreed in several of the Cantons, as well Popish as Protestant, that they should insist positively on the Neutrality of *Savoy*; and that they should demand a Direct and Immediate Answer from the Minister of *France* upon that Head, and that if it was not satisfactory, they should take Possession of the said Dutchy, and joyn with the Duke of *Savoy*.

These were Resolutions which *France* would not be gl'd to see put in Execution, because it would at least remove the Seat of the



the War to her own Frontiers; but with what Artifice she has brought it about, I leave to all that understand the *French* Conduct to determine; Since we find the honest and vigorous Resolutions of the several respective Cantons have a quite different Face when they come to a General Meeting of the *Cantons*, where Delays are made Use of, a few high Words spoken, but the Matter put off to another Assembly, and no Resolution taken.

This was the very Case when the King of *France* seiz'd upon the *French Comté*, which was their Neighbour on the West, as this of *Savoy* is on the South or South-West.

The *Swiss* talk'd big, and deliver'd Letters and Memorials to the *French* Ambassador about the Loss of their Barrier, and the Neighbourhood of the *French*, and threatned to recal their Troops out of the *French* Service.

The *French*, who knew well enough how to deal with the *Swiss*, gave them good Words and long Memorials, and pretended to put the *French Comté* into the Hands of the *Swiss*, as a Deposit till the Peace, and entered into a Treaty for that Purpose; but in that Treaty always found out Excuses and Delays, and whenever the *Swiss* demanded a positive Answer, then there was the immediate Delay of sending a Courier to *Paris*, and some extraordinary Affairs usually put off his Return; so that one Month run out after another; and still the King of *France* had Possession of the Province, and fortified himself in it with his usual Vigour and Diligence!

Every Man that knows the History of those Times, knows with what trifling Delays the *Swiss* were thus dally'd with and banter'd, till at last the Peace was made,

the whole Province conceded to the *French*, annex'd to the Crown of *France*, and the *Swiss* laugh'd at by all the World.

Just thus the *French* act with them now, and any Nation in the World may be so us'd that are divided and sub-divided into so many poor and petty Governments as these are; and that depend upon so many several Interests, Opinions, and Parties.—

The *Swiss* see *Savoy* now in the Hands of the *French*, and their Armies marching thro' it to attack their Ally, the Duke of *Savoy*; they are all severally and respectively convinc'd, that it is their Interest to protect that Dutchy, and keep the *French* out; and that they ought to do it, being bound to do so by their Treaties with that Prince.

— But all these petty States that are separately thus resolv'd; cannot be unitedly so when they meet together; and so the Duke of *Savoy* sees himself abandon'd, and they see the *French* settling themselves under the Thresholds of their Doors.

Would any Prince in *Europe* trouble himself to fortify against a People who are to be harrangu'd into or out of any Thing? The King of *France* knows the World too well to trouble himself with Arms and Troops, Bastions and Hornworks, when one Species *viz.* Pistoles will answer; he never fights an Enemy he can buy; he never conquers with the Sword, where he can subdue by the Tongue: And this I take to be the true Reason, why the *French* have been content to lay themselves open on the Side of *Italy*.

There may be other Reasons, but I think these are as much to the Purpose, and fully answer the present Design: As to the Alliances and Treaties between the *Swiss* and the Duke of *Savoy*, I refer to the next.

## ADVICE from the Scandalous CLUB.

THE Society receiv'd some Reproaches lately, concerning their Reflections on the *Dutch*, and the endeavours of some to render the proceedings of the Confederates suspected to each other; and the Author of these Reflections seems to insult us upon the head, the *Dutch* having since Renew'd their Correspondence.

As to Fact, the Society examining their Authorities, do find that they were as careful then as they ought; and as they desire always to be in every thing they Relate, that they are sure they were Right; and so they have nothing to do in that Case, but to insist upon it.

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But as to the pretence that the *Dutch* have made a Treaty of Commerce, and Correspondence with the Enemy, the Gentleman would do well to look back on the matter of Fact, that he may be sure he is not in the wrong, since upon the whole, it will only appear — That the Time for the prohibition of Correspondence by Letters which was agreed to by the States, being expir'd, and it being plain to them, that the end, which was the preventing Intelligence, is not obtained, they do not think fit to Renew it again.

A Person was brought before the Club, for that he, being a Brother Author too, had made some very undecent Reflections upon the D—— of M——'s March; — as that the D—— of M—— was run away with the *English* Army; that he was gone to Besiege a Castle in the Air; that he was going to Change the Old Song from the *French* to the *English*, and instead of up the Hill made it,

*Went cross the Rhine and so came home again.*

Upon this Matter the Society. Censur'd the Man, as he deserv'd and bid him go home and Read the Bible, which it was suppos'd he might be as much a Stranger, to, as he was to Good Manners; and that he would there find, *That he that judges a Master before he hears it, 'Tis Folly and Shame unto him;* or to paraphrase upon it in Short, He that Condemns an Action before he sees the Reason of it, is One of Solomon's Fools, Anglice, a Party Blockhead.

Some other Resolutions of the Society, as to this Affair, may be the Subject of Our next; for the Author left them sitting upon the matter.

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